



September 26, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama  
United States Senator  
Obama for America  
P.O. Box 8102  
Chicago, Illinois 60680

Dear Senator Obama:

Congratulations on being selected by your party as its candidate for the United States Presidency. We are at a very important time in the history of our country where our political leadership will make a very big difference in how we address the major challenges we face. Mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative stand ready to support the new president in whatever way we can.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence represent the largest freshwater system in the world and form the foundation for the economic well being and quality of life for tens of millions of Americans and Canadians. The economies of the eight Great Lakes States and the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario, when considered together, form the second largest economy in the world, surpassed only by the United States. Protection and restoration of the resource are central to the future success of the region. Investment in this work has been shown to yield a very high rate of return.

We are writing to seek your commitment to advance the agenda of protecting and restoring the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. More specifically, we would like to know your position on:

1. A new Water Quality Agreement between the United States and Canada that effectively addresses such key issues as climate change, invasive species, toxic chemicals, habitat protection, and many others necessary for the health of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and also recognizes the key role of local governments in this effort;
2. Full implementation of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy, with special emphasis on investment in wastewater and drinking water infrastructure;
3. Comprehensive invasive species legislation that regulates ballast water and other pathways and provides effective screening of all species considered for introduction into the country;

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*Lynn Peterson, Mayor of Thunder Bay, Chair*

*Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago, Founding United States Chair*

*David Miller, Mayor of Toronto, Founding Canadian Chair*



4. Authorization and appropriation of funds under the Great Lakes Legacy Act to accelerate the cleanup of toxic sediments at areas of concern under the Water Quality Agreement;
5. A strong climate change agenda that addresses all greenhouse gas emissions effectively, and develops key mitigation and adaptation strategies for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region.

There has never been a time when it is so clear that protection of the environment and improvement of the economy are so closely linked. As the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region transitions to a new economy, investment in this area will be central to the economic recovery of the entire country.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters. Our Board of Directors listed in the attached looks forward to hearing from you in the near future as to your position on these key issues.

Sincerely,

David A. Ullrich  
Executive Director